

Appl. No. 10/079,103

Amdt. dated February 24, 2006

Reply to Office Action of November 30, 2005

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1-43. (cancelled)

44. (Currently Amended) A catheter comprising an elongate tubular member having a proximal end, a distal end, and a lumen extending therebetween, the lumen defined by an inner tubular liner, the elongate tubular member comprising:

a relatively stiff proximal section comprising a metallic stiffener and a non-metallic stiffener, the metallic and non-metallic stiffeners being coaxially wound exterior to a proximal portion of the inner tubular liner; and

a relatively flexible distal section comprising the non-metallic stiffener coaxially wound exterior to a distal portion of the inner liner, the metallic stiffener terminating before reaching the distal section such that the distal section is [[free]] devoid of a metallic stiffener.

45. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, wherein the non-metallic stiffener is interposed between the inner tubular liner and the metallic stiffener.

46. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, wherein the metallic stiffener is interposed between the inner tubular liner and the non-metallic stiffener.

47. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, wherein the metallic stiffener is a helically wound ribbon.

48. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, wherein the non-metallic stiffener is a helically wound ribbon.

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49. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, wherein the metallic stiffener is helically wound in one direction and the non-metallic stiffener is helically wound in an opposite direction.

50. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, wherein the metallic and non-metallic stiffeners are interwoven to form a braid member.

51. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 50, wherein the metallic and non-metallic stiffeners each comprise a ribbon.

52. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 51, wherein the ribbons have a thickness of between about 0.3 mil. and about 3.5 mil. and a width between about 2.5 mil. and about 12.0 mil.

53-55. (Canceled)

56. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, wherein the non-metallic stiffener comprises a material capable of undergoing permanent deformation upon exposure to steam.

57. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, wherein the non-metallic stiffener comprises a polymer.

58. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 57, wherein the polymer comprises a liquid crystal polymer.

59. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 57, wherein the polymer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of polyimide, polyethylene, polyethylene terephthalate, and Nylon.

60. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, wherein the metallic stiffener comprises a superelastic alloy.

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61. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 57, wherein the superelastic alloy comprises nickel and titanium.

62. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, wherein the metallic stiffener comprises stainless steel.

63. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, wherein the metallic stiffener comprises a material selected from the group consisting of gold, platinum, and copper.

64. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, wherein the metallic stiffener comprises a platinum-tungsten alloy.

65. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, wherein the inner tubular liner comprises a proximal portion and a distal portion, and the proximal and distal portions each comprise a polymer.

66. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 65, wherein the polymer is selected from the group consisting of polyimide, polyamide, polyester, polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, polyfluorocarbons, polyurethane, polysulfone, ethyl vinyl acetate, polyether block amide, styrene-ethylene/butylene-styrene, styrene-butadiene-styrene, polyethylene terephthalate, and their mixtures, alloys, blends, copolymers, and block copolymers.

67. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, wherein the proximal section comprises a proximal outer cover exterior to the metallic and non-metallic stiffeners, and the distal section comprises a distal outer cover exterior to the non-metallic stiffener.

68. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 67, wherein the proximal and distal outer covers comprise a material selected from the group consisting of polyimide, polyamide, polyether block amide, styrene-ethylene/butylene-styrene, styrene-butadiene-styrene,

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polyethylene, polypropylene, polyvinyl chloride, fluoropolymer, vinylidene fluoride, polyurethane, and their mixtures, alloys, copolymers, and block copolymers.

69. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 67, wherein the proximal and distal outer covers are integrally formed and comprise a polymer which can be heat-shrunk onto the metallic and non-metallic stiffeners.

70. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 67, wherein at least one of the inner tubular liner and the outer covers are radiopaque.

71. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, further comprising a removable, slidable guidewire placed interior to and in slidable relationship to the distal and proximal sections.

72. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 44, wherein the non-metallic stiffener comprises a helically wound ribbon having a rectangular cross-section extending generally parallel to a longitudinal axis of the catheter in the proximal section, and extending generally perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the catheter in the distal section.

73. (Currently Amended) A catheter comprising an elongate tubular member having a proximal end, a distal end, and an inner lumen therebetween, the inner lumen defined by an inner tubular liner, the elongate tubular member comprising:

a relatively stiff proximal section comprising a proximal braid member comprising at least one metal strand [[and]] interwoven with at least one non-metal strand, and a proximal outer cover, the at least one metal strand and the at least one non-metal strand of the braid being coaxially wound exterior to the inner tubular liner; and

a relatively flexible distal section comprising the inner tubular liner and a distal braid member comprising the at least one non-metal strand of the proximal braid member, and a distal outer cover, the at least one metal strand of the proximal braid member terminating before reaching the distal section, such that the distal section is devoid of the at least one metal strand of the proximal braid member.

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74. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 73, wherein the metal strand and the non-metal strand each comprise a ribbon.

75. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 74, wherein the ribbons have a thickness of between about 0.5 mil. and about 3.5 mil. and a width between about 2.5 mil. and about 12.0 mil.

76. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 73, wherein the at least one metal strand comprises four metal strands and the at least one non-metal strand comprises four non-metal strands.

77. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 73, wherein the non-metal strand comprises a polymer.

78. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 77, wherein the polymer comprises a liquid crystal polymer.

79. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 77, wherein the polymer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of polyimide, polyethylene, polyethylene terephthalate, and Nylon.

80. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 73, wherein the metal strand comprises a superelastic alloy.

81. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 80, wherein the superelastic alloy comprises nickel and titanium.

82. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 73, wherein the metal strand comprises stainless steel.

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83. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 73, wherein the metal strand comprises a platinum-tungsten alloy.

84. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 73, wherein the inner tubular liner and the proximal and distal outer covers comprise a polymer.

85. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 73, further comprising a removable, slidable guidewire placed interior to and in slidable relationship to the distal and proximal sections.

86. (Previously Presented) The catheter of claim 73, wherein the distal section is disposed at the distal end of the catheter.

87. (Currently Amended) A catheter comprising an elongate tubular member having a proximal end, a distal end, and a lumen extending therethrough, the catheter comprising:

a proximal section comprising a metallic stiffener interwoven with a non-metallic stiffener to form a braid member; and

a distal section comprising the non-metallic stiffener of the proximal section, and wherein the metallic stiffener of the proximal section terminates proximal the distal section such that the distal section is devoid of a metallic stiffener.